

APPLICATION
OF
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FOR
UNITED STATES LETTERS PATENT
ON
GAMING MACHINE

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EXPRESS MAIL NO.

GAMING MACHINE

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This is a divisional of U.S. patent application no. 09/966,776, filed September 28, 2001,
5 now pending.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates generally to the field of gaming machines and, more particularly, to
a gaming machine including a top box cabinet having a door.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

10 Today, many gaming machines in casinos have top boxes. A top box is a cabinet that lies
on top of the gaming machine. Top boxes are generally designed without openings or doors
because they have to be both water resistant, to prevent liquids from damaging internal
components, and secure, so that unauthorized persons are not able to tamper with the interior of
the gaming machine.

15 Moreover, top boxes typically include colorful front panels made of glass that are backlit
in order to attract attention to the gaming machine. Consequently, to service the inside of most
top boxes, e.g., to fix a light bulb or to access the circuitry located therein, the entire glass panel
must be removed from the top box. This process is very cumbersome and the glass panel usually
ends up being broken.

20 Accordingly, those skilled in the art have long recognized a need for a top box, the inside
of which may be serviced quickly and efficiently without there being a high probability of
breaking the glass located within the top box; that has a simple, cost-effective design; and is
suitable for both upright and slant top gaming machines.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Briefly, and in general terms, the present invention provides a top box, the inside of which may be serviced quickly and efficiently without there being a high probability of breaking the glass panel located within the top box; that has a simple, cost-effective design; and is suitable for both upright and slant top gaming machines.

More particularly, by way of example and not necessarily by way of limitation, the present invention provides a top box for an upright or slant top gaming machine, the top box comprising a housing having a substantially hollow interior and a door having a display panel. The display panel is operatively attached to the top box housing preferably by a hinge. However, any means for attaching, including pivot pins, may be used as long as the door may be opened and closed. Furthermore, the top box may be of any shape. A lip or rubber seal at least partially circumscribes the frame so that the lip or rubber seal prevents liquids encountered by the gaming machine from damaging components that are located inside the gaming machine. The cabinet is secured with a lock so that only authorized persons may gain access to its interior.

Hence, the present invention satisfies a long existing need for a top box, the inside of which may be serviced easily without there being a high probability of breaking the glass panel located within the top box; that has a simple, cost-effective design; and is suitable for both upright and slant top gaming machines.

These and other objects and advantages of the invention will become apparent from the following, more detailed description when taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings of illustrative embodiments.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is an elevational perspective view of an upright gaming device, in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is an elevational perspective view of an upright gaming device showing a top box with a front panel in an open position, in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 3 is an elevational perspective view of an upright gaming device, in accordance with a second embodiment of the present invention; and

FIG. 4 is an elevational perspective view of a slant top gaming device, in accordance with a third embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring now to the drawings, wherein like reference numerals denote like or corresponding parts throughout the drawing figures and, more particularly, to FIG. 1, there is shown an upright gaming machine 10 having a substantially non-rectangular top box 12. The top box 12 includes a housing 11 and a door 9. The housing has two side portions 8 and a bottom portion 7. The door 9 is comprised of a frame 16 circumscribing the glass panel 18. The frame 16 is attached to the housing 11 by means of a hinge 14 located on the side of the top box 12. Casino personnel may service the inside of the top box 12 by unlocking a lock 19 and swinging open the door 9 via the hinge 14. Thus, there is no need to remove the glass 18 from the top box 12 when seeking access to the interior portion of the top box.

FIG. 2 shows the same embodiment, illustrated in FIG. 1; but with the door 9 in an open position thereby exposing a light bulb 15 and wires 13. Because the door 9 opens outwardly instead of inwardly, the door may be attached to the top box 12 at any point without interfering with the wires 13, circuitry, components, and the like that are housed within the machine 10. A

lip 17 fits underneath the housing 11 when the door 9 is closed so that liquid spilled on the machine 10, will not be able to find its way inside the top box 12 to damage the gaming machine.

A second embodiment of the invention is shown in FIG. 3. This second embodiment has two hinges 14 that are attached to the top of a rectangular top box 32 and a rubber seal 37 that prevents liquid from entering the top box.

FIG. 4 shows a third embodiment of the invention. A top box 42 sits atop a slant top gaming machine 40. The door 9 is attached to the top box 42 by means of pivot pins 44 located at the bottom of the top box.

It should be appreciated by one skilled in the art that the door on the top box may be attached to the top box at any number of locations using any type of connection means such as hinges, pivot pins, and the like. For example, one or multiple hinges, pivot pins, and the like, or any combination thereof, may be used. It should further be appreciated that the top box may be of any shape.

Hence, the present invention satisfies a long existing need for a top box, the inside of which may be serviced easily without there being a high probability of breaking the glass located within the top box; that has a simple, cost-effective design; and is suitable for both upright and slant top gaming machines.

It will be apparent from the foregoing that, while particular forms of the invention have been illustrated and described, various modifications can be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. Accordingly, it is not intended that the invention be limited, except as by the appended claims.